



NEWS RELEASE

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Indiana Firm Fortunate for SBDC Guidance

While many company owners strive to reach the Fortune 500, Digger Specialties founder Loren "Digger" Graber, is just fine being a part of the "Fortunate 500." While his Bremen, Indiana business has grown into a successful venture, Digger feels that the ingredients to his success and happiness include a balance between financial, health, family, and spiritual issues. Keeping this perspective has always been and remains important to Digger. His story exemplifies that faith and persistence can lead to success.

During the late 1970s, Digger was a dairy and grain farmer. As agriculture began going into difficult times, Digger packaged his alfalfa in miniature hay bales and began marketing them as pet food. As he waited for the product to establish itself in the marketplace, he began tinkering with bending PVC plumbing pipe into a frame for pet tents. Soon, a local company asked him to bend PVC frames for floating lawn chairs.

As word spread about Digger's new trade, a vinyl fence marketing firm approached him about installing a PVC fence around a Michigan horseracing track. The job required positioning the PVC posts with just the right curve to protect the jockey in case the horses ran into the fence. Upon the completion of the project, Digger found a completely new market awaited him.

Researching the market potential for vinyl fencing, Digger discovered that he could enter into an infant industry that had considerable room for growth. Having difficulty penetrating the pet food market, Digger decided to concentrate exclusively on the vinyl fencing business.

In 1984, Digger Specialties, Inc. opened its doors to begin manufacturing and selling vinyl fencing and related maintenance-free products. As the company began to grow, Digger consulted with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located in South Bend. Working with the SBDC, Digger was able to determine how to prioritize his ventures needs.

Partnering with the SBA, the SBDC Program provides management assistance to current and prospective small business owners. SBDCs offer one-stop assistance by providing a wide variety of information and guidance. Indiana's SBDC network is comprised of a Lead Center in Indianapolis and 13 regional centers across the state.

Digger feels the information learned at the SBDC was invaluable. "I would strongly suggest anyone going into business should contact the SBDC to help them develop their business plan and begin to map out their strategy," he notes.

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